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'NEW STAGE' SEEN FOR SOUTH AFRICA

But U.S. Study Finds No Basic
Threat Yet to Government

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Special to The New York Times

WASHINGTON, July 28 — A State Department study has concluded that the political situation in South Africa has entered "a new stage" and that the current round of unrest there is much more widespread than in past years. But it says the unrest does not represent a fundamental threat to the South African Government or the white-dominated society.

A high White House official familiar with intelligence reports said: "It is not a revolutionary or a prerevolutionary situation, but we are looking to Pretoria to show restraint and lift the state of emergency."

Senators Hope for Bill

Officials said a number of intelligence studies were under way as part of a continuing review of the situation in South Africa. This review includes a study of whether President Reagan should go along with Congressionally mandated economic sanctions against South Africa.

On Saturday, Senator Richard G. Lugar, chairman of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee, and other legislators said they hoped for final action on such a bill this week and expected

President Reagan to approve it. The Senate majority leader, Bob Dole, said today that he hoped Congress would pass a bill before next week's recess.

But White House, State Department and intelligence officials interviewed stressed that there was nothing in the intelligence reports that would cause policy makers to make basic changes in their longstanding policy of "constructive engagement." By this policy the Administration has sought to change South Africa's system of racial discrimination by working with the Government rather than by threatening it or taking punitive actions.

The officials said a special study by intelligence agencies on the situation in South Africa was due this week.

A wide range of Administration officials involved in policy on South Africa see the disorders there as part of a cycle of violence, pressure for change and power-sharing, and repression, with the cycle getting a little worse each time. They expressed the view that unless progress was made toward power-sharing with the black majority this would eventually lead to an explosion, but they did not believe that time was near at hand.

According to Administration officials, the State Department study asserts that the bulk of the South African protesters are teen-agers who are not led or controlled by the outlawed African National Congress, the oldest and most influential organization seeking black majority rule.

The study calls special attention to what it says is a generational factor, noting that the protesters are generally younger than those who opposed the Government in Sharpeville in March 1960 and in Soweto in June 1976.

"The leaders of the A.N.C. couldn't shut this off even if they wanted to," said an official familiar with the report, which was prepared last week. Officials said the report noted that even though the disorders had wide backing among blacks, the protesters neither had arms or access to arms.

"There is no sense this could get out of hand in a life-threatening way for the Government," the official continued.

"It could have adverse short-term economic effects — boycotts and no-shows for work. But it is not going to stop foreign investments. People who want to invest always find a way to do it."

Hardening of Policies Predicted

The study, which was prepared by the department's Bureau of Intelligence and Research, predicted that the South African Government would harden its policies internally and externally.

"The riots will stop even the glacial pace of internal reform," one intelligence official said.

Another official said, "It will reinforce their bunker mentality, and that in turn will affect how they deal with their neighbors."

The idea that South Africa will be less amenable to both a diplomatic settlement on independence for the territory of South-West Africa and to an improvement in relations with the Marxist Governments of Angola and Mozambique was supported by a study put together by the Central Intelligence Agency and other intelligence agencies last week, officials said.

The Administration has been seeking a South African withdrawal from South-West Africa, which is also known as Namibia, and a Cuban withdrawal from Angola to set the stage for independence for South-West Africa, which South Africa administers.

The State Department report also observes that the South African Government is now arresting what exists of a moderate leadership group as well as the teen-agers who make up the bulk of the demonstrators. Administration officials consider this a serious mistake since they say these leaders might be the only ones who can help control the situation.

The prevailing sentiment among Administration experts on South Africa is that the present disorders will subside. One said, "Sharpeville blew over, and Soweto blew over, and even though this is worse, there's nowhere it can really go."

While concerned about what Pretoria will do next, these experts expressed even greater concern about what they called an overreaction here that might put South Africa further beyond the reach of American influence.